

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MANILA 02454 171136Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 /074 W

-----171153Z 076893 /14

R 170909Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6126

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 2454

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, RP

SUBJ: DECREE ON REGIONAL AUTONOMY

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MARCOS IS EXPECTED TO SIGN SHORTLY A DECREE ESTABLISHING "REGIONAL AUTONOMY" THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES. A DRAFT OF THE DECREE WAS SUBMITTED TO THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE BATASANG BAYAN (LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL) FEBRUARY 14 TOGETHER WITH DECREE AUTHORIZING A PLEBISCITE ON MUSLIM AUTONOMOUS REGION. THE REGIONAL AUTONOMY SCHEME SEEMS DESIGNED MORE TO MINIMIZE "CHRISTIAN BACKLASH" TOWARD PRESIDENT MARCOS' PLANS FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT TO THE MUSLIM INSURGENCY THAN AS A SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO DEVOLVE AUTHORITY AWAY FROM MANILA. END SUMMARY

2. AT A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE BATASANG BAYAN FEBRUARY 14-15, PRESIDENT MARCOS INTRODUCED CONCURRENTLY DECREES
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MANILA 02454 171136Z

CALLING FOR A PLEBISCITE IN THE SOUTH TO ASCERTAIN THE COMPOSITION OF THE MUSLIM AUTONOMOUS REGION (REPORTED SEPTELS) AND A DRAFT DECREE ESTABLISHING "REGIONAL AUTONOMY" THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES. THE LATTER DECREE, ENTITLED "THE SANGGUNIANG PAMPOOK LAW," WAS GIVEN RITUAL APPROVAL BY THE BATASANG BAYAN FEBRUARY 15 AND NOW AWAITS MARCOS' SIGNATURE. IT CALLS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL

ASSEMBLY (SANGGUNANG PAMPOOK) AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (LUPONG TAGPAGPAGANAP NG POOK) IN EACH OF THE 12 EXISTING REGIONS OF THE PHILIPPINES. EACH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY WILL HAVE 21 MEMBERS, 17 ELECTED FROM THE PROVINCES AND CITIES WITHIN THE REGION, AND 4 ELECTED AT-LARGE REPRESENTING YOUTH, AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, NON-AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, AND PROFESSIONALS. THE CHAIRMEN AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ARE TO BE APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY. THEY NEED NOT BE MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY. THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WILL EXERCISE THE POWERS OF THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY WHEN THE LATTER IS NOT IN SESSION.

3. THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES WILL BE PROSCRIBED FROM EXERCISING RESPONSIBILITY IN AREAS RESERVED BY THE CONSTITUTION FOR THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT (DEFENSE, FOREIGN POLICY, ETC.) OR THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (LOCAL ORDINANCES). HOWEVER, THEY WILL BE EMPOWERED TO RAISE THEIR OWN TAXES AND TO PASS LEGISLATION RELATING TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, URBAN AND RURAL PLANNING, MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOLS AND HEALTH PROGRAMS, AND PRESERVATION OF CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS, AND CULTURE.

4. THE DECREE WILL NOT AFFECT METRO MANILA. DURING THE BATASANG BAYAN DELIBERATIONS METRO MANILA GOVERNOR IMELDA MARCOS INQUIRED WHY MANILA WAS NOT INCLUDED IN NEW DECREE. AFTER A HASTY CONFERENCE WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS, WHO PRESIDED OVER THE SESSION, SOLICITOR GENERAL MENDOZA REPLIED THAT MANILA IS A SPECIAL CASE WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE COVERED

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MANILA 02454 171136Z

BY ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION. MRS. MARCOS THEN ASKED THAT METRO MANILA'S INTENT TO EXPAND EASTWARD TOWARD THE PACIFIC OCEAN BE INSERTED IN THE RECORD, SINCE "MANY OF THE DELEGATES MAY BE UNAWARE OF THESE PLANS."

5. COMMENT: WHILE A ROUGH OUTLINE OF NEW "REGIONAL AUTONOMY" PROPOSAL WAS REVEALED DURING THE BATASANG BAYAN SESSION, MANY QUESTIONS REMAIN. TIMING OF ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD INDICATE DECREE IS DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE "CHRISTIAN BACKLASH" TO MUSLIM AUTONOMY BY MAKING IT APPEAR THAT THE MUSLIMS ARE NOT GETTING MORE THAN NON-MUSLIMS (WHICH WILL PROBABLY TURN OUT TO BE THE CASE). PLANS TO DECENTRALIZE GOVERNMENT THROUGH REGIONALIZATION HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING IN PHILIPPINE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CIRCLES FOR AT LEAST 20 YEARS. REGIONAL BOARDS ALREADY EXIST, BUT ARE PURELY ADVISORY. IT NOW APPEARS THAT EACH PROVINCE IS TO HAVE A RUBBER STAMP LEGISLATURE ANALOGOUS TO THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL. DRAFT DECREE WAS OBVIOUSLY HURRIEDLY DRAWN UP AND WAS UNDERGOING CHANGES UP TO THE

LAST MINUTE. FURTHER ALTERATIONS MAY BE ANTICIPATED.
REGARDLESS OF HOW THE REGIONAL AUTONOMY SCHEME EVOLVES, IT
SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT PRESIDENT MARCOS WILL CHOOSE TO
RELINQUISH HIS CONTROL OVER ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT TO
ANY APPRECIABLE EXTENT.
SULLIVAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROVINCE, REFERENDUMS, VOTINGS, SELFGOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MANILA02454
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770056-1183
Format: TEL
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770232/aaaabcjj.tel
Line Count: 122
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 66a417c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3297471
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DECREE ON REGIONAL AUTONOMY
TAGS: PINT, PINS, RP, XF, (MARCOS, FERDINAND)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/66a417c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009